

# NORTHSTAR NEWS



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Vol. 33 Issue 12 December 2002

## Minutes for the November 16<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting of the Northstar Chapter, NRHS.

Submitted by David Norman~ Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 p.m. by chapter president Dan Meyer in the St. Paul Fire Department Training Center with 28 members and guests present.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the October membership meeting, as printed in the November 2002 issue of Northstar News. A correction was made to note the proper spelling of the last name of Dawn Holmberg. The minutes were approved, as corrected. Treasurer Joe Fishbein was not present, but

President Meyer said that Joe had told him that the group's finances are OK. National Director Marty Swan yielded the floor to Frank Willkie, who attended the recent national directors' meeting in Mt. Pleasant, IA in his place. Frank reported that they approved holding the 2005

national convention in Portland, OR. President Meyer thanked Frank for going to the meeting. Marty said that he had only preliminary minutes of the meeting. Trip Director John Goodman had nothing to report on possible trips. He did report that there would be an open house at the Twin City Amtrak station Sunday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, to show a diesel powered MU car built by Colorado Railcar.

Old Business - Marty Swan reminded people that he is accepting reservations for the Holiday Party. We have an interesting program planned. Dennis Loudon reported for the Nominating Committee. They have nominated all incumbents for re-election. President Meyer called for additional nominations from the floor—trustee, national director, treasurer,

secretary, vice-president, president. There were no nominations from the floor for any office. The nominations were declared closed. John Goodman moved that the secretary be instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for all offices. Russ



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The Northstar News is looking for a new **EDITOR** to start in January. Lauren has an internship which will not allow her the time to continue being the editor-- those interested in putting out this monthly publication should talk or email **DAN MEYER**.



-8-



-1-



# NORTHSTAR NEWS

Isbrandt seconded the motion and it carried. Bill Herzog reported on the status of the 8327 restoration project.. A text of the proposed plaque to be placed on the engine was published in the November issue of Northstar News. Anyone with suggestions for improvements should see him at the break after the business meeting. He suggested that the board of the Northstar Chapter ask for a grant from the national NRHS for additional cosmetic restoration. Dan Meyer asked that everyone from the board should meet with him after the business meeting. Subcommittees of the national convention committee have met. Members of the national NRHS national convention committee will be coming on Saturday, December 7th, to check on our progress in planning the 2004 NRHS national convention. We will need help from many members of the chapter to plan and run the convention.

New Business - Bill Herzog talked about the website for the B&O Museum in Baltimore, which is where the 2003 NRHS national convention will take place. They will be having two parades of steam engines, etc. There will also be tents where railroad items will be for sale. These events will begin June 28 and run through July 6, 2003.

Another item of Old Business - One of the suggestions last month to increase member participation in the chapter was to have a photo contest. Each month, the Northwestern Illinois Chapter, based in Rockford, has members bring in five slides on the topic of the month. We might try that, starting in January.

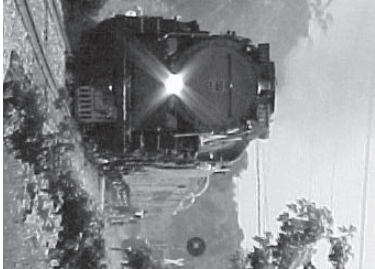
More New Business - Glen Holmberg attended the recent Trainfest in Milwaukee. One of the things

he learned there was that the August Derleth book on the Milwaukee Road has been reprinted.

A motion to adjourn the business meeting was made, seconded, and carried at 7:31 p.m.

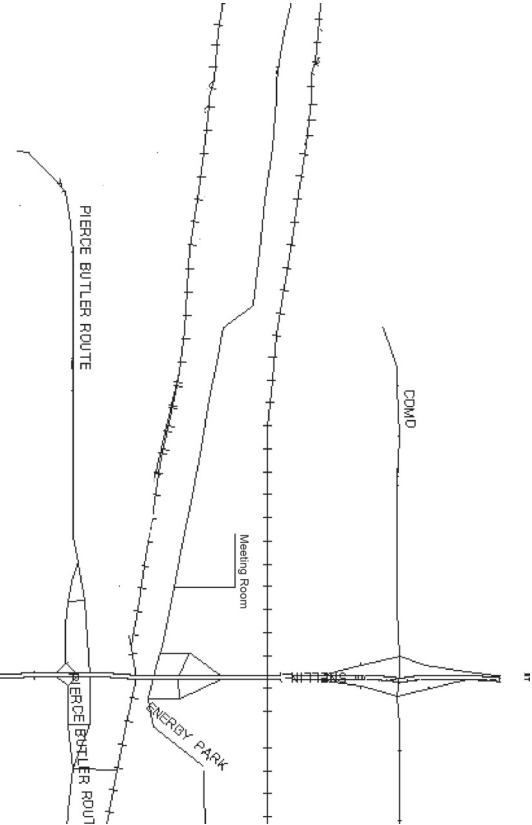
Announcements - Monday night, November 18th, there will be a presentation on Railroads of Dakota County at the Performing Arts Center in downtown Lakeville. Roger Clark, one of the presenters, said that he had gotten a phone call a few days ago from Dick Prosser, who was also scheduled to participate in the program. Dick can't come, as his doctor has advised him not to travel. He will be having surgery on his hip on December 9th. Prosser sent greetings. His address is available to those who want to send a get-well card.

Roger Clark will present the program tonight, which is a preview of Monday night's presentation. Dan Meyer talked about a railfan who was stopped by police while railfanning. We have a stack of brochures available on American Orient Express, Eurail, etc. Pop is available at the back of the room.



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**The JANUARY Northstar Chapter, NRHS Meeting is  
Saturday, JANUARY 18th @ 7:00 PM  
@ the St. Paul Fire Department Training Center.**

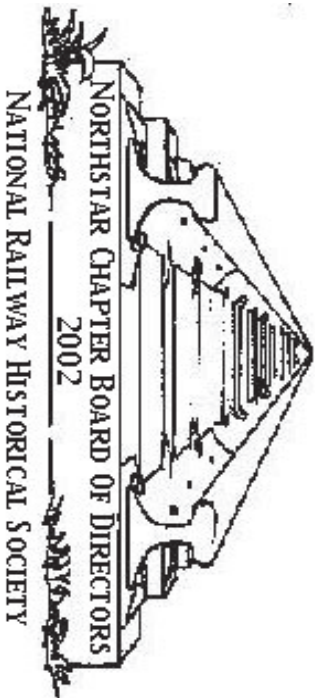


Directions: Take Snelling Ave to Energy Park Drive. Exit and turn right at the bottom of the ramp. Watch for the entrance gate to the Firefighters Training Center. (Look for the cement building that looks scorched.) If you go past Midway Stadium you have gone too far.

Program for TBA.

**Please note this is JANUARY's meeting as December's meeting was the Christmas Banquet at Timucci's-- it was a lot of fun.**

# NORTHSTAR NEWS



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and an 'o' following the zero.

**Editor: OPEN!!!!**

*Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in the Northstar News are not necessarily the opinions of the NRHS or the Northstar Chapter;*

**The Northstar News can also be read ONLINE! <http://www.northstar-nrhs.org/>**



# NORTHSTAR NEWS

## Information off the Railspot list about the FBI warning concerning possible attacks on railroads

Richard Whitenight, Arlington, Texas

This day started out rather innocently, having spotted a westbound manifest at the Cooper St crossing in Arlington, Tx (MP 233.11 Dallas Sub) at approximately 1447HRS. The train consisted of UP 5011 (SD70M) and UP 9574, with 77 cars. I thought to myself, that since this was a westbound, I'd head for Tower 55 and the Bernhardt wye and wait for it to arrive at the tower. I arrived at Tower 55 at approximately 1515HRS and set up to record the trains. When I arrived via the muddy roadway, I saw Danny (non Railspot) and a gentleman by the name of Ken (learned later he was out of Norfolk VA, doing some work on a condenser for TXU (Texas Utilities)); he was at this location taking photographs. I later learned there was another individual out there (unknown name) out of Cleburne, TX, also taking photographs. I talk to them a little, while I have my specially made vacation binder open and jotting down my engine numbers, direction, amount of cars, etc for the train movements at Tower 55.

There was light traffic initially, but my day from Hell began at approximately 1615HRS. This is when two patrol cars of the Fort Worth Police Dept (hereafter referred to as FWPD)

arrive on scene. I thought to myself, "Oh, s\*\*t!" These two officers get out of their cars and one comes to my car, identifies himself and ask what I was doing out there.

I tell him I'm watching the trains as they move through the area. While he asks for and takes my Texas DL to run a "wants and warrants" check on, his backup officer walks over to Ken's vehicle, which was parked next to mine. The officer that spoke with me explained that an engineer for one of the passing trains had called his dispatcher, letting them know there were individuals out there taking photographs of the trains (that would be Ken and the subject from Cleburne). They also explain the fact that they were briefed at the start of their "watch" or shift, that the FBI had put out a warning about al-Qaeda possibly targeting the railroads for terrorist activity. I tell him that I understand what he's talking about, because I work for a police department and have heard the same thing. At this point, he has already interviewed me and still has my Texas DL. He tells me that he needs me to stay put in my car, and that his supervisor (i.e. Sergeant) is on the way to speak to them (she doesn't even show up until about 1715-1730HRS).

She shows up about an hour later, along with a detective with the Terrorism Task Force out of Fort Worth and/or Tarrant County (this guy is a Det Charles Boykin). Det Boykin interviews each one of us separately of course. I basically tell him that I'm out there watching the trains as a hobby. I explain to him what I was looking for



# NORTHSTAR NEWS

and what information I take down (Lord I won't do that again <grin>). He basically reiterates about the FBI warnings, and asks me several questions about why I was out there, do I look for specific types of cars, have I been asked by any suspicious individuals to come out there and look for specific types of cars, etc, to which I answer truthfully.

By this time the UP Yard Supervisor on call is out there on scene (believe his name was Mike Pollard; he was representing UP). At some point, the FWPD make the decision to search our

vehicles, having each one of us sign a "Consent to Search" form, which I sign because I have nothing in my car that would be incriminating. They ask to see my log book or Vacation record, which included my directions for my vacation, my railroad spotting form, my explanation of all of the "marks" on the cars, the explanation of the UP and BNSF point of origin signifiers, etc. This was later "seized" by the Det Boykin, in order for them to understand what we were basically talking about to them, since they were police officers and not hobbyist like those of us on Railspot. I sign the form and acknowledge that he is taking custody of the book...so there went all of my 11-12 sightings that I was going to post to the list, vice this long recitative. But, it gets worse, as the detective from the Terrorism Task Force asked me to wait, because a rep from the FBI wanted to talk to us. If I had a clue this day would have been like this, I never would have set foot in that area.

This gorgeous FBI Special Agent, by the name of Deborah L Eckart, who works out of 2601 Meacham Bly, Suit 500, Fort Worth, Tx, basically takes my name, SSN, who I work for, business

phone number and my name of course. The FWPD Sergeant/watch supervisor, uses a digital camera to take a picture of my car, the license plate of my car, the interior of my car, and of course me. By this time, I have a pretty good idea what would happen next, and I was right. At approximately 1930HRS, I sign a FWPD Trespass Warning, issued by Mr. Pollard, in the presence of a FWPD officer, basically warning me from returning to 665 E Vickery St, Fort Worth, Texas, the Bernhardt wye area.

Since I work for a PD, I know to return would mean being arrested for a Class-B misdemeanor for Criminal Trespass, which could result in a fine of about \$1,000, and a maximum of 90 days jail. So, I ain't going to set my bohiny back in that area, unless Mr Pollard says it's okay to do so. I was advised by one of the FWPD officers that I could probably check with Pollard in six months, to see if they would allow me to come back to the area. I think they realized that we were there because we like the trains, but I also believe they had no choice to issue us a trespass warning, which I fully understood.

So, I'm without my log book, which Det Boykin stated would be copied and eventually returned to me, most likely by a Det Scott Carr, which is a police officer from my department, assigned to the task force. I don't look forward to what he might have to say to me, because he'll probably tell me that I should have known better than to have showed up there, since it is private property. But, it should be noted that the UP are basically aware of us Railspot personnel and are more than

willing to allow us to park in that area, as long as we don't interfere with the UP operations, such as walk on their tracks, which I'm smart enough not to do.

If the Task Force learns on how to better protect the railroads, then my experience would have been worth it. I hate the idea of missing out on watching the trains at Tower 55, but I probably should have seen it coming. I would recommend to everyone on this list who frequents the Tower 55 area, to consider it an Off Limits area, as I was advised by the FWPD that they've had some "incidents" there prior to them speaking to us.

So, this is my final (for now) report from Tower 55. I hope that the UP will allow me back in there sometime in the future, but for now, I'll watch my trains from a few points in Arlington that are accessible to train fans, etc. There are a few points in Saginaw, but I'm not sure whether they've tightened up their security at the ATSF yard or not.

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Special thanks to Marty for forwarding this to the Editor  
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# NORTHSTAR NEWS

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**WANTED: EDITOR FOR THE Northstar News**

**Must be able to leap small paragraphs in single keystrokes.**

**Spelling would be a good thing, especially since this Editor apparently couldn't spell most of the time.**

**EMail is a great tool to utilize, but it is not a necessary end-all.**

**Dan, Dawn, and Glen do not bite and they fold the Northstar with minimal paper cuts. (They even stamp them)**

**Those interested in the job should contact Dan Meyer now, before the position fills.**

